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sworn. There was a pause, and an exclamation of horror from all present, but the Captain was too cool and steady to be disconcerted; he immediately groped about until he got the candle, and proceeding calmly to a remote corner of the chapel, took up a half-burned turf which lay there, and after some trouble, succeeded in lighting it again. He then explained what had taken place; which indeed was easily done, as the candle happened to be extinguished by a pigeon which sat exactly above it. The chapel, I should have observed, was at this time, like many country chapels, unfinished inside, and the pigeons of a neighbouring dove-cote, had built nests among the rafters of the uncalled roof, which circumstance also explained the rushing of the wings, for the birds had been affrighted by the sudden loudness of the noise. The mocking voices were nothing but the echoes, rendered naturally more awful by the scene, the mysterious object of the meeting, and the solemn hour of the night.

When the candle was again lighted, and these startling circumstances accounted for, the persons whose vengeance had been deepening more and more during the night, rushed to the altar in a body, where each in a voice trembling with passionate eagerness, repeated the oath, and as every word was pronounced, the same echoes heightened the wildness of the horrible ceremony, by their long and unearthly tones. The countenances of these human tigers were livid with suppressed rage—their knit brows, compressed lips, and kindled eyes, fell under the dim light of the taper, with an expression calculated to sicken any heart not absolutely diabolical.

As soon as this dreadful rite was completed, we were again startled by several loud bursts of laughter, which proceeded from the lower darkness of the chapel, and the captain on hearing them, turned to the place, and reflecting for a moment, said in Irish, “*gutshonish, awohlehee*”—come hither now, boys. A rush immediately took place from the corner in which they had secreted themselves all the night—and seven men appeared, whom we instantly recognized as brothers and cousins of certain persons who had been convicted some time before, for breaking into the house of an honest poor man in the neighbourhood, from whom, after having treated him with barbarous violence, they took away such fire arms as he kept for his own protection.

It was evidently not the captain's intention to have produced these persons until the oath should have been generally taken, but the exulting mirth with which they enjoyed the success of his scheme betrayed them, and put him to the necessity of bringing them forward somewhat before the concerted moment.

The scene which now took place was beyond all power of description; peals of wild fiend-like yells rang through the chapel, as the party which stood on the altar, and that which had crouched in the darkness met; wringing of hands, leaping in triumph, striking of sticks and fire arms against the ground and the altar itself, dancing and cracking of fingers, marked the triumph of some hellish propensity. Even the captain for a time was unable to restrain their fury; but at length he mounted the platform before the altar once more, and with a stamp of his foot, recalled their attention to himself and the matter in hand.

“Boys,” said he, “enough of this, and too

much; an' well for us it is that the chapel is in a lonely place, or our foolish noise might do us no good—let them that swore so manfully just now, stand a one side, till the rest kiss the book one by one.”

The proceedings, however, had by this time taken too alarming a shape, for even the captain to compel them to a blindfold oath; the first man he called flatly refused to swear, until he should first hear the nature of the service that was required. This was echoed by the remainder, who taking courage from the firmness of this person, declared generally, that until they first knew the business they were to execute, none of them should take the oath. The captain's lip quivered slightly, and his brow once more knit with the same hellish expression, which I have remarked gave him so much the appearance of an embodied fiend; but this speedily passed away, and was succeeded by a malignant sneer, in which lurked, if there ever did in a sneer, “a laughing devil,” calmly, determinedly, atrocious.

“It wasn't worth yer whiles to refuse the oath,” said he, mildly, “for the thruth is, I had next to nothing for ye's to do—not a hand, maybe, would have to *rise*, only just to look on, an', if any resistance would be made, to shew yourselves; yer numbers would soon make them see that resistance would be no use whatever in the present case. At all events the oath of *secrecy* must be taken, or woe be to him that will refuse *that*, he wont know the day, the hour, nor the minute, when he'll be made a *spatch-cock ov.*” He then turned round, and placing his right hand on the Missal, swore “in the presence of God, and before his holy altar, that whatever might take place that night he would keep secret, from man or mortal, except it was the holy priest on his dying day, and that neither bribery, nor imprisonment, nor death, would wring it from his heart;” having done this, he struck the book violently, as if to confirm the energy with which he swore, and then calmly descending the steps, stood with a serene countenance, like a man conscious of having performed a good action. As this oath did not pledge those who refused to take the other to the perpetration of any specific crime, it was readily taken by all present; preparations were then made to execute what was intended; the half-burned turf was placed in a little pot—another glass of whiskey was distributed, and the door being locked by the captain, who kept the key as parish master and clerk, the crowd departed silently from the chapel.

(To be concluded in our next.)

#### REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

*Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*: with Notices of his Life. By Thomas Moore, in 2 vols. vol. 1. 4to. pp. 670.—London, Murray, 1830.

WHAT an antithetical mind!—tenderness, roughness—delicacy, coarseness—sentiment, sensuality—soaring and grovelling, dirt and deity—all mixed up in that one compound of inspired clay! Such is Lord Byron's recorded judgment of Robert Burns, a judgment in our opinion eminently just and true, and such we hesitate not to say, is very nearly a transcript of the impressions of his Lordship's own character and mind, with which we rise from the perusal of his life and writings, to some of which that

never have reached, and that now never can reach the public eye, we have had opportunities of access, as well as to the volume now before the world. In forming our estimate of Lord Byron, there are strong feelings of scorn and abhorrence of the moral character of the man, mingled with our intense admiration of his transcendent poetical genius. We are the more anxious not to mince this matter, because we think a very false unhealthy tone has been adopted on the subject, by many eminent writers in these latter days, and especially in the case of the very individual whom Lord Byron, as above related, judged so hardly yet so truly, before his mind was warped and fallen from its high estate. By some extraordinary obliquity of moral vision, genius has come to be viewed as an extenuation or excuse of palpable delinquency, and those who felt disposed to censure vice as an offence against God and man, not to be palliated on the plea of superior mental powers, have been regarded somewhat as dull wooden-hearted moralists, incapable of estimating the strength of temptation to which men of more lively sensibilities are exposed, or of appreciating the motives which influence the conduct of men, placed far above themselves in the scale of intellectual being. Against all this, we enter our protest. The faculties of man are two-fold, sensual and intellectual. The former, as we remember to have read in Sallust, he shares with the brute animals, the latter is common to him with the deity. To which of the two classes genius belongs, we can have no difficulty in deciding, and if the quick general perception which it confers, sharpens the action even of the lower senses, a proposition which we do not feel ourselves called upon to combat, it is certain, that by adding still greater strength to the rational quickening spirit of man, it establishes the sovereignty of the subtler essence over the grosser part of human nature, in a manner more marked and effectual, than in ordinary characters, and renders the submission of the soul to the senses, in a man of genius, if possible more inexcusable than in any other. If this be not so, if, as we find, those who affect to applaud it most in modern times, frequently maintaining—genius do really tend to disable a man from resisting the impulses of his animal nature, although these impulses be clearly seen to be criminal and pernicious, then is genius a base and grovelling thing, an odious and destructive illusion of the lying spirit, and not, as we believe it, an emanation from the Deity, ennobling and purifying as with seraphic fire, the heart and mind it touches and kindles.

It may be said, however, that we are not warranted in prying into the private recesses of a man's life, or “drawing his frailties from their dread abode,” to gratify the malignant curiosity of an unfeeling world. To a certain extent this is quite true. If a man in his public conduct, or in his published works, has given “none occasion of offence,” then, whatever his personal deficiencies may be, the correction of them ought to be as private as their existence is little known; but public faults require public animadversion, and in any case, a biographer has, in our opinion, no latitude of choice, he must either make up his mind to extenuate nothing, or if friendship or any other cause indispose him to this line of conduct, the only remaining procedure consistent with his honesty and duty, is to decline the task altogether. If partial or coloured statements be imposed upon us for the

whole truth, we are as egregiously deceived as if falsehoods were directly stated.

Whilst these remarks were called for by a consideration of the general subject of modern memoirs of men of genius, we hasten to assure our readers that they are not at all intended to apply to Mr. Moore's, who, in the work before us, shows himself, as far at least as he has yet proceeded, wholly superior to that selfish spirit, as we account it, which has sometimes induced men of letters to slur over the faults of other gifted spirits, as a sort of guarantee that similar indulgence would be extended to themselves. Whatever may have been, at one time, the faults and follies of Mr. Moore's own literary labors, he has lived long enough to see and to know the pernicious consequences of every departure from the path of truth and rectitude, even in the wantonness of the Muse, and though his tone in speaking of Lord Byron's failings is very naturally and properly apologetic, he never forgets his duty to the public, where the interests of morality and religion are concerned. It may be, that had Byron lived longer and under happier influences, he too would have learned the same salutary lesson, but the baleful poison of his later writings was widely disseminated, and uncorrected as it has been by any antidote from the same source, we cannot hesitate to avow the opinion, that it had been well for mankind and for himself, if Byron had never been. We do not say this to mystify the ladies, who know not, and God forbid they ever should know, the grounds on which we form our judgment, but from a deep conviction of its truth, and of the necessity of a plain avowal of that truth, however unpalatable, at a time when it is very fashionable to let our admiration of genius swallow up our detestation of immorality in word and deed.

We now turn gladly to the first volume of Moore's *Byron*. It is a work replete with absorbing interest, and will be read with eagerness by every one at all acquainted with the politer literature of England in the nineteenth century, upon which the illustrious subject of the "Notices" shed so bright a lustre, dimmed though it may have subsequently been, by those blighting errors, which as we have sufficiently condemned already, we shall not inflict the pain upon ourselves and our readers, of again advertizing to. By far the greater portion of the volume is occupied by Lord Byron's original letters. A brief introductory sketch conducts us only to the 17th year of his life; and throughout the rest of the volume, the "Notices" are nearly confined to connecting links between the letters, explanatory observations, and comments on the character and conduct of Lord Byron. In these we have to congratulate Mr. Moore most heartily, on the great improvement he has shewn in taste and style, as well as in the "weightier matters of the law," to which we have before alluded. We have little of that affected prettiness of style, which justified the smart saying about his life of Sheridan, that it was "like an allegory on the banks of the Nile." For the most part it is natural and simple; and we are gradually led into the character and feelings of his hero, with the least appearance of effort imaginable, up to the period of his second and final departure from his native country in 1816, with which event the volume before us closes. The circumstances of Lord Byron's subsequent life and writings, re-

quire more difficult and delicate management in their development, than that which went before, and we shall look with some anxiety, mingled with eager interest, for the conclusion of Mr. Moore's labours.

We shall now proceed to give our readers a much richer treat than any dull remarks of ours could afford them, by citing from the work itself such passages as seem to us most likely to afford some insight into the life and character of the illustrious bard, and of the manner in which his biographer has discharged the important task confided to his charge.

"Finding but little benefit from the Nottingham practitioner, Mrs. Byron in the summer of the year 1779, thought it right to remove her boy to London, where at the suggestion of Lord Carlisle, he was put under the care of Dr. Baillie. It being an object, too, to place him at some quiet school, where the means adopted for the cure of his infirmity might be more easily attended to, the establishment of the late Dr. Glennie, at Dulwich, was chosen for that purpose; and, as it was thought advisable that he should have a separate apartment to sleep in, Doctor Glennie had a bed put up for him in his own study. Mrs. Byron who had remained a short time behind him at Newstead, on her arrival in town took a house upon Sloane Terrace; and, under the direction of Dr. Baillie, one of the Messrs. Sheldrake was employed to construct an instrument for the purpose of straightening the limb of the child. Moderation in all athletic exercises was, of course, prescribed; but Dr. Glennie found it by no means easy to enforce compliance with this rule, as, though sufficiently quiet when along with him in his study, no sooner was the boy released for play, than he showed as much ambition to excel in all exercises as the most robust youth of the school; 'an ambition,' adds Dr. Glennie, in the communication with which he favoured me a short time before his death, 'which I have remarked to prevail in general in young persons labouring under similar defects of nature.'

"Having been instructed in the elements of Latin grammar according to the mode of teaching adopted at Aberdeen, the young student had now unluckily to retrace his steps, and was, as is too often the case, retarded in his studies and perplexed in his recollections, by the necessity of toiling through the rudiments again in one of the forms prescribed by the English schools. 'I found him entering upon his tasks,' says Dr. Glennie, 'with alacrity and success. He was playful, good-humoured, and beloved by his companions. His reading in history and poetry was far beyond the usual standard of his age, and in my study he found many books open to him, both to please his taste and gratify his curiosity; among others, a set of our poets, from Chaucer to Churchill, which I am almost tempted to say, he had more than once perused from beginning to end. He showed at this age an intimate acquaintance with the historical parts of the Holy Scriptures, upon which he seemed delighted to converse with me, especially after our religious exercises of a Sunday evening; when he would reason upon the facts contained in the Sacred Volume, with every appearance of belief in the divine truths which they unfold. 'That the impressions,' adds the writer, 'thus imbibed in his boyhood, had, notwithstanding the irregularities of his after life, sunk deep into his mind, will appear, I think,

to every impartial reader of his works in general; and I never have been able to divest myself of the persuasion that, in the strange aberrations which so unfortunately marked his subsequent career, he must have found it difficult to violate the better principles early instilled into him.'

"It should have been mentioned, among the traits which I have recorded of his still earlier years, that, according to the character given of him by his first nurse's husband, he was, when a mere child, 'particularly inquisitive and puzzling about religion.'

"It was not long before Dr. Glennie began to discover—what instructors of youth must too often experience—that the parent was a much more difficult subject to deal with than the child. Though professing entire acquiescence in the representations of this gentleman, as to the propriety of leaving her son to pursue his studies without interruption, Mrs. Byron had neither sense nor self-denial enough to act up to these professions; but, in spite of the remonstrances of Dr. Glennie, and the injunctions of Lord Carlisle, continued to interfere with and thwart the progress of the boy's education in every way that a fond, wrong-headed, and self-willed mother could devise. In vain was it stated to her that, in all the elemental parts of learning which are requisite for a youth destined to a great public school, young Byron was much behind other youths of his age, and that, to retrieve this deficiency, the undivided application of his whole time would be necessary. Though appearing to be sensible of the truth of these suggestions, she not the less embarrassed and obstructed the teacher in his task. Not content with the interval between Saturday and Monday, which, contrary to Dr. Glennie's wish, the boy generally passed at Sloane Terrace, she would frequently keep him at home a week beyond this time, and, still further to add to the distraction of such interruptions, collected around him a numerous circle of young acquaintances, without exercising, as may be supposed, much discrimination in her choice. 'How indeed could she?' asks Dr. Glennie—'Mrs. Byron was a total stranger to English society and English manners; with an exterior far from prepossessing, an understanding where nature had not been more bountiful, a mind almost wholly without cultivation, and the peculiarities of northern opinions, northern habits, and northern accent, I trust I do no great prejudice to the memory of my countrywoman, if I say Mrs. Byron was not a Madame de Lambert, endowed with powers to retrieve the fortune, and form the character and manners of a young nobleman, her son.'

"The interposition of Lord Carlisle, to whose authority it was found necessary to appeal, had more than once given a check to these disturbing indulgences. Sanctioned by such support, Dr. Glennie even ventured to oppose himself to the privilege, so often abused, of the usual visits on a Saturday; and the scenes which he had to encounter on each new case of refusal were such as would have wearied out the patience of any less zealous and conscientious schoolmaster. Mrs. Byron, whose paroxysms of passion were not, like those of her son, 'silent rages,' would, on all these occasions, break out into such audible fits of temper, as it was impossible to keep from reaching the ears of the scholars and the servants; and Dr. Glennie had, one day, the pain of over-

hearing a schoolfellow of his noble pupil say to him, 'Byron, your mother is a fool;' to which the other answered gloomily, 'I know it.' In consequence of all this violence and impracticability of temper, Lord Carlisle at length ceased to have any intercourse with the mother of his ward, and on a further application from the instructor, for the exertion of his influence, said, 'I can have nothing more to do with Mrs. Byron,—you must now manage her as you can.'

" Among the books that lay accessible to the boys in Doctor Glennie's study was a pamphlet written by the brother of one of his most intimate friends, entitled 'Narrative of the Shipwreck of the Juno on the coast of Arracan, in the year 1795.' The writer had been the second officer of the ship, and the account which he had sent home to his friends of the sufferings of himself and his fellow-passengers had appeared to them so touching and strange, that they determined to publish it. The pamphlet attracted but little, it seems, of public attention; but among the young students of Dulwich Grove it was a favourite study; and the impression which it left on the retentive mind of Byron may have had some share, perhaps, in suggesting that curious research, through all the various Accounts of Shipwrecks upon record, by which he prepared himself to depict with such power a scene of the same description in *Don Juan*. The following affecting incident, mentioned by the author of this pamphlet, has been adopted, it will be seen, with but little change either of phrase or circumstance, by the poet:—

" Of those who were not immediately near me I knew little, unless by their cries. Some struggled hard, and died in great agony; but it was not always those whose strength was most impaired that died the easiest, though, in some cases, it might have been so. I particularly remember the following instances.—Mr. Wade's servant, a stout and healthy boy, died early and almost without a groan; while another of the same age, but of a less promising appearance, held out much longer. The fate of these unfortunate boys differed also in another respect highly deserving of notice. Their fathers were both in the fore-top when the lads were taken ill. The father of Mr. Wade's boy hearing of his son's illness, answered with indifference, 'that he could do nothing for him,' and left him to his fate. The other, when the accounts reached him, hurried down, and watching for a favourable moment, crawled on all fours along the weather gunwale to his son, who was in the mizen rigging. By that time, only three or four planks of the quarter-deck remained, just over the weather-quarter gallery; and to this spot the unhappy man led his son, making him fast to the rail to prevent his being washed away. Whenever the boy was seized with a fit of reaching, the father lifted him up and wiped the foam from his lips; and, if a shower came, he made him open his mouth to receive the drops, or gently squeezed them into it from a rag. In this affecting situation both remained four or five days, till the boy expired. The unfortunate parent, as if unwilling to believe the fact, then raised the body, gazed wistfully at it, and, when he could no longer entertain any doubt, watched it in silence till it was carried off by the sea; then, wrapping himself in a piece of canvas, sunk down and rose no more; though he must have lived two days longer, as we judged from the

quivering of his limbs, when a wave broke over him."

Mr. Moore adds, and we think justly, with reference to Lord Byron's version of the shipwreck in *Don Juan*, that this is one of the instances in which poetry must be content to yield the palm to prose, in touching pathos and natural power.

Previously to this there is a strange tale of Byron's infant fondness for a Scotch girl named Mary Duff, when he was only eight years of age; but, notwithstanding the classical example of Dante, gravely adduced as a precedent for this precocious passion, we cannot help regarding the whole story (leaden-hearted mortals that we are!) as a childish whim, too foolish for narration in this age of utility and anti-sentiment. The story of his *second* love, if we are to count Mary Duff's affair as the first dawning of the tender passion, and of his removal from domestic tuition to Harrow School, is thus related:

" It was probably during one of the vacations of this year, that the boyish love for his young cousin, Miss Parker, to which he attributes the glory of having first inspired him with poetry, took possession of his fancy.—'My first dash into poetry (he says) was as early as 1800. It was the ebullition of a passion for my first cousin, Margaret Parker (daughter and grand-daughter of the two Admirals Parker,) one of the most beautiful of evanescent beings. I have long forgotten the verses, but it would be difficult for me to forget her—her dark eyes—her long eyelashes—her completely Greek cast of face and figure! I was then about twelve—she rather older, perhaps a year. She died about a year or two afterwards, in consequence of a fall, which injured her spine, and induced consumption. Her sister Augusta (by some thought still more beautiful) died of the same malady; and it was indeed, in attending her, that Margaret met with the accident which occasioned her own death. My sister told me, that when she went to see her, shortly before her death, upon accidentally mentioning my name, Margaret coloured through the paleness of mortality to the eyes, to the great astonishment of my sister, who (residing with her grandmother, Lady Holderness, and seeing but little of me, for family reasons) knew nothing of our attachment, nor could conceive why my name should affect her at such a time. I knew nothing of her illness, being at Harrow and in the country, till she was gone. Some years after, I made an attempt at an elegy—a very dull one.

" I do not recollect scarcely any thing equal to the *transparent* beauty of my cousin, or to the sweetness of her temper, during the short period of our intimacy. She looked as if she had been made out of a rainbow—all beauty and peace.

" My passion had its usual effects upon me—I could not sleep—I could not eat—I could not rest; and although I had reason to know that she loved me, it was the texture of my life to think of the time which must elapse before we could meet again—being usually about twelve hours of separation! But I was a fool then, and am not much wiser now.

" He had been nearly two years under the tuition of Doctor Glennie, when his mother, discontented at the slowness of his progress—though being, herself, as we have seen, the principal cause of it—entretned so urgently of Lord Carlisle to have him removed to a public

school, that her wish was at length acceded to; and, 'accordingly,' says Doctor Glennie, 'to Harrow he went, as little prepared as it is natural to suppose from two years of elementary instruction, thwarted by every art that could estrange the mind of youth from preceptor, from school, and from all serious study.'

" To a shy disposition, such as Byron's was in his youth—and such as, to a certain degree, it continued all his life—the transition from a quiet establishment, like that of Dulwich Grove, to the bustle of a great public school was sufficiently trying. Accordingly, we find from his own account, that, for the first year and a half, he 'hated Harrow.' The activity, however, and sociableness of his nature soon conquered this repugnance; and, from being, as he himself says, 'a most unpopular boy,' he rose at length to be a leader in all the sports, schemes, and mischief of the school.

" For a general notion of his disposition and capacities at this period, we could not have recourse to a more trustworthy or valuable authority than that of the Rev. Dr. Drury, who was at this time head master of the school, and to whom Lord Byron has left on record a tribute of affection and respect, which, like the reverential regard of Dryden for Dr. Busby, will long associate together honourably the names of the poet and the master. From this venerable scholar I have received the following brief, but important, statement of the impressions which his early intercourse with the young noble left upon him:—

" Mr. Hanson, Lord Byron's solicitor, consigned him to my care at the age of 13½, with remarks, that his education had been neglected; that he was ill prepared for a public school, but that he thought there was a *cleverness* about him. After his departure I took my young disciple into my study, and endeavoured to bring him forward by inquiries as to his former amusements, employments, and associates, but with little or no effect;—and I soon found that a wild mountain colt had been submitted to my management. But there was mind in his eye. In the first place, it was necessary to attach him to an elder boy, in order to familiarize him with the objects before him, and with some parts of the system in which he was to move. But the information he received from his conductor gave him no pleasure, when he heard of the advances of some in the school, much younger than himself, and conceived by his own deficiency that he should be degraded, and humbled, by being placed below them. This I discovered, and having committed him to the care of one of the masters, as his tutor, I assured him he should not be placed till, by diligence, he might rank with those of his own age. He was pleased with this assurance, and felt himself on easier terms with his associates; for a degree of shyness hung about him for some time. His manner and temper soon convinced me, that he might be led by a silken string to a point, rather than by a cable;—on that principle I acted. After some continuance at Harrow, and when the powers of his mind had begun to expand, the late Lord Carlisle, his relation, desired to see me in town;—I waited on his lordship. His object was to inform me of Lord Byron's expectations of property when he came of age, which he represented as contracted, and to inquire respecting his abilities. On the former circumstance I made no remark; as to the latter, I replied,

‘ He has talents, my lord, which will add lustre to his rank.’ ‘ Indeed!!!’ said his lordship, with a degree of surprise, that, according to my feeling, did not express in it all the satisfaction I expected.

“ The circumstance to which you allude, as to his declamatory powers, was as follows:—The upper part of the school composed declamations, which, after a revision by the tutors, were submitted to the master; to him the authors repeated them, that they might be improved in manner and action, before their public delivery. I certainly was much pleased with Lord Byron’s attitude, gesture, and delivery, as well as with his composition. All who spoke on that day adhered, as usual, to the letter of their composition, as, in the earlier part of his delivery, did Lord Byron. But to my surprise he suddenly diverged from the written composition, with a boldness and rapidity sufficient to alarm me, lest he should fail in memory as to the conclusion. There was no failure;—he came round to the close of his composition without discovering any impediment and irregularity on the whole. I questioned him, why he had altered his declamation? He declared he had made no alteration, and did not know, in speaking, that he had deviated from it one letter. I believed him, and from a knowledge of his temperament am convinced, that fully impressed with the sense and substance of the subject, he was hurried on to expressions and colourings more striking than what his pen had expressed.”

At the early age of sixteen, during one of his Harrow vacations, commenced that attachment to Miss Chaworth, afterwards Mrs. Musters, which made so lasting an impression on his heart, and which, according to his own firm persuasion, powerfully influenced the whole character and conduct of his future life. We need scarcely inform our readers, that it is of this passion and its unfortunate results, that he has drawn the picture in “The Dream,” one of the most touching and interesting of his minor poems.

“ To the family of Miss Chaworth, who resided at Annesley, in the immediate neighbourhood of Newstead, he had been made known, some time before, in London, and now renewed his acquaintance with them. The young heiress herself combined with the many worldly advantages that encircled her, much personal beauty, and a disposition the most amiable and attaching. Though already fully alive to her charms, it was at the period of which we are speaking that the young poet, who was then in his sixteenth year, while the object of his adoration was about two years older, seems to have drunk deepest of that fascination whose effects were to be so lasting;—six short summer weeks which he now passed in her company being sufficient to lay the foundation of a feeling for all life.”

“ In the dances of the evening at Matlock, Miss Chaworth, of course, joined, while her lover sat looking on, solitary and mortified. It is not impossible, indeed, that the dislike which he always expressed for this amusement may have originated in some bitter pang, felt in his youth, on seeing ‘the lady of his love’ led out by others to the gay dance from which he was himself excluded. On the present occasion, the young heiress of Annesley having had for her partner (as often happens at Matlock) some person with whom she was wholly unacquainted, on her resuming her seat, Byron

said to her, pettishly, ‘ I hope you like your friend.’ The words were scarce out of his lips when he was accosted by an ungainly-looking Scotch lady, who rather boisterously claimed him as ‘ cousin,’ and was putting his pride to the torture with her vulgarity, when he heard the voice of his fair companion retorting archly in his ear, ‘ I hope you like your friend.’

“ His time at Annesley was mostly passed in riding with Miss Chaworth and her cousin; sitting in idle reverie, as was his custom, pulling at his handkerchief, or in firing at door which opens upon the terrace, and which still, I believe, bears the marks of his shots. But his chief delight was in sitting to hear Miss Chaworth play; and the pretty Welsh air, ‘ Mary Anne,’ was (partly, of course, on account of the name) his especial favourite. During all this time he had the pain of knowing that the heart of her he loved was occupied by another;—that, as he himself expresses it,

‘ Her sighs were not for him; to her he was Even as a brother—but no more.’ ”

His feelings, on first leaving Harrow for College, are thus described:

“ When I first went up to college it was a new and a heavy-hearted scene for me: firstly, I so much disliked leaving Harrow, that though it was time (I being seventeen), it broke my very rest for the last quarter with counting the days that remained. I always hated Harrow till the last year and half, but then I liked it. Secondly, I wished to go to Oxford and not to Cambridge. Thirdly, I was so completely alone in this new world, that it half broke my spirits. My companions were not unsocial, but the contrary—lively, hospitable, of rank and fortune, and gay far beyond my gaiety. I mingled with, and dined and supped, &c. with them; but, I know not how, it was one of the deadliest and heaviest feelings of my life to feel that I was no longer a boy.”

Of the circumstances connected with his first publication of poems, which preceded the ‘ Hours of Idleness,’ the following account is given:

“ The small volume of Poems, which he had now, for some time, been preparing, was, in the month of November, ready for delivery to the select few among whom it was intended to circulate; and to Mr. Becher the first copy of the work was presented. The influence which this gentleman had, by his love of poetry, his sociability and good sense, acquired at this period over the mind of Lord Byron, was frequently employed by him in guiding the taste of his young friend, no less in matters of conduct than of literature; and the ductility with which this influence was yielded to, in an instance I shall have to mention, will show how far from untractable was the natural disposition of Byron, had he more frequently been lucky enough to fall into hands, that ‘ knew the stops’ of the instrument, and could draw out its sweetness as well as its strength.

“ In the wild range which his taste was now allowed to take through the light and miscellaneous literature of the day, it was but natural that he should settle with most pleasure on those works, from which the feelings of his age and temperament could extract their most congenial food; and, accordingly, Lord Strangford’s Camoëns and Little’s Poems are said to have been, at this period, his favourite study. To the indulgence of such a taste his reverend friend very laudably opposed himself,—representing with truth, (as far, at least, as the lat-

ter author is concerned,) how much more worthy models, both in style and thought, he might find among the established names of English literature. Instead of wasting his time on the ephemeral productions of his contemporaries, he should devote himself, his adviser said, to the pages of Milton and of Shakespeare, and, above all, seek to elevate his fancy and taste by the contemplation of the sublimer beauties of the Bible. In the latter study this gentleman acknowledges that his advice had been, to a great extent, anticipated, and that with the poetical parts of the Scripture he found Lord Byron deeply conversant;—a circumstance which corroborates the account given by his early master, Doctor Glennie, of his great proficiency in scriptural knowledge while, yet but a child, under his care.

“ To Mr. Becher, as I have said, the first copy of his little work was presented; and this gentleman, in looking over its pages, among many things to commend and admire, as well as some almost too boyish to criticise, found one poem in which, as it appeared to him, the imagination of the young bard had indulged itself in a luxuriance of colouring beyond what even youth could excuse. Immediately, as the most gentle mode of conveying his opinion, he sat down and addressed to Lord Byron some expostulatory verses on the subject, to which an answer, also in verse, was returned by the noble poet as promptly,—with, at the same time, a note, in plain prose, to say, that he felt fully the justice of his reverend friend’s censure, and that, rather than allow the poem in question to be circulated, he would instantly recall all the copies that had been sent out, and cancel the whole impression. On the very same evening this prompt sacrifice was carried into effect;—Mr. Becher saw every copy of the edition burned, with the exception of that which he retained in his own possession, and another which had been despatched to Edinburgh, and could not be recalled.

“ This trait of the young poet speaks sufficiently for itself;—the sensibility, the temper, the ingenuous plianceness which it exhibits, show a disposition capable, by nature, of every thing we most respect and love.

“ Considering himself bound to replace the copies of his work which he had withdrawn, as well as to rescue the general character of the volume from the stigma this one offender might bring upon it, he set instantly about preparing a second edition for the press, and during the ensuing six weeks, continued busily occupied with his task.”

Of Byron’s general habits and mode of life in 1807, we read as follows:

“ Though so remarkably shy, when he first went to Southwell, this reserve, as he grew more acquainted with the young people of the place, wore off; till, at length, he became a frequenter of their assemblies and dinner-parties, and even felt mortified if he heard of a rout to which he was not invited. His horror, however, at new faces still continued; and if, while at Mrs. Pigot’s, he saw strangers approaching the house, he would instantly jump out of the window to avoid them. This natural shyness concurred with no small degree of pride to keep him aloof from the acquaintance of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood, whose visits, in more than one instance, he left unreturned;—some, under the plea that their ladies had not visited his mother; others, because they had neglected to pay him this com-

pliment sooner. The true reason, however, of the haughty distance, at which, both now and afterwards, he stood apart from his more opulent neighbours, is to be found in his mortifying consciousness of the inadequacy of his own means to his rank, and the proud dread of being made to feel this inferiority by persons to whom, in every other respect, he knew himself superior. His friend Mr. Becher frequently expostulated with him on this unscrupulousness; and to his remonstrances, on one occasion, Lord Byron returned a poetical answer, so remarkably prefiguring the splendid burst, with which his own volcanic genius opened upon the world, that, as the volume containing the verses is in very few hands, I cannot resist the temptation of giving a few extracts here:—

“ Dear Becher, you tell me to mix with mankind,—  
I cannot deny such a precept is wise;  
But retirement accords with the tone of my mind,  
And I will not descend to a world I despise.

“ Did the Senate or Camp my exertions require,  
Ambition might prompt me at once to go forth;  
And, when infancy's years of probation expire,  
Perchance, I may strive to distinguish my birth.

“ The fire, in the cavern of Etna concealed,  
Still mantles unseen, in its secret recess;—  
At length, in a volume terrific revealed,  
No torrent can quench it, no bounds can repress.

“ Oh thus, the desire in my bosom for fame  
Bid me live but to hope for posterity's praise;  
Could I soar, with the Phoenix, on pinions of flame,  
With him I would wish to expire in the blaze.

“ For the life of a Fox, of a Chatham the death,  
What censure, what danger, what woes would I  
brave?  
Their lives did not end when they yielded their  
breath;—  
Their glory illuminates the gloom of the grave!”

“ In his hours of rising and retiring to rest he was, like his mother, always very late; and this habit he never altered during the remainder of his life. The night, too, was at this period, as it continued afterwards, his favourite time for composition; and his first visit in the morning was generally paid to the fair friend who acted as his amanuensis, and to whom he then gave whatever new products of his brain the preceding night might have inspired. His next visit was usually to his friend Mr. Becher's, and from thence to one or two other houses on the Green, after which the rest of the day was devoted to his favourite exercises. The evenings he usually passed with the same family among whom he began his morning, either in conversation, or in hearing Miss Pigot play upon the piano-forte, and singing over with her a certain set of songs which he admired, among which the ‘Maid of Lodi’ (with the words, ‘My heart with love is beating’), and ‘When Time who steals our years away,’ were, it seems, his particular favourites. He appears, indeed, to have, even thus early, shown a decided taste for that sort of regular routine of life,—bringing round the same occupations at the same stated periods,—which formed so much the system of his existence during the greater part of his residence abroad.

“ Those exercises, to which he flew for distraction in less happy days, formed his enjoyment now: and between swimming, sparring, firing at a mark, and riding, the greater part of his time was passed. In the last of these accomplishments he was by no means very expert. As an instance of his little knowledge of horses, it is told, that, seeing a pair one day pass his window, he exclaimed, ‘What beautiful horses! I should like to buy them.’—‘Why, they are your own, my lord,’ said his

servant. Those who knew him, indeed, at that period, were rather surprised, in after-life, to hear so much of his riding; and the truth is, I am inclined to think, that he was at no time a very adroit horseman.”

An extract from his memorandum-book in the same year, contains an enumeration of the works he had already read in all the various departments of human knowledge; and considering that he was then but nineteen years of age (he was born in January, 88,) it certainly is more voluminous and comprehensive than might have been anticipated. It is to be remembered, however, that in the regular business of school education, Byron was lamentably neglectful and deficient.

“ *History of England.*—Hume, Rapin, Henry, Smollet, Tindal, Belsham, Bisset, Adolphus, Holinshed, Froissart's *Chronicles* (belonging properly to France).

“ *Scotland.*—Buchanan, Hector Boethius, both in the Latin.

“ *Ireland.*—Gordon.

“ *Rome.*—Hooke, Decline and Fall by Gibbon, Ancient History by Rollin (including an account of the Carthaginians, &c.) besides Livy, Tacitus, Eutropius, Cornelius Nepos, Julius Caesar, Arrian, Sallust.

“ *Greece.*—Mitford's *Greece*, Leland's Philip, Plutarch, Potter's *Antiquities*, Xenophon, Thucydides, Herodotus.

“ *France.*—Mezeray, Voltaire.

“ *Spain.*—I chiefly derived my knowledge of old Spanish History from a book called the *Atlas*, now obsolete. The modern history, from the intrigues of Alberoni down to the Prince of Peace, I learned from its connexion with European politics.

“ *Portugal.*—From Vertot; as also his account of the Siege of Rhodes—though the last is his own invention, the real facts being totally different.—So much for his Knights of Malta.

“ *Turkey.*—I have read Knolles, Sir Paul Rycaut, and Prince Cantemir, besides a more modern history, anonymous. Of the Ottoman History I know every event, from Tangralopi, and afterwards Othman I. to the peace of Passarowitz, in 1718—the battle of Cutzka, in 1739, and the treaty between Russia and Turkey, in 1790.

“ *Russia.*—Tooke's *Life of Catherine II.* Voltaire's *Czar Peter*.

“ *Sweden.*—Voltaire's Charles XII. also Norberg's Charles XII.—in my opinion the best of the two.—A translation of Schiller's *Thirty Years' War*, which contains the exploits of Gustavus Adolphus, besides Harte's *Life of the same Prince*. I have somewhere, too, read an account of Gustavus Vasa, the deliverer of Sweden, but do not remember the author's name.

“ *Prussia.*—I have seen, at least, twenty Lives of Frederick II. the only Prince worth recording in Prussian annals. Gillies, His own Works, and Thiebault—none very amusing. The last is paltry, but circumstantial.

“ *Norway.*—I know little of. Of Norway I understand the natural history, but not the chronological.

“ *Germany.*—I have read long histories of the house of Suabia, Wenceslaus, and, at length, Rudolph of Hapsburgh and his thick-lipped Austrian descendants.

“ *Switzerland.*—Ah! William Tell, and the battle of Morgarten, where Burgundy was slain.

“ *Italy.*—Davila, Guicciardini, the Guelphs and Ghibellines, the battle of Pavia, Massenello, the revolutions of Naples, &c. &c.

“ *Hindostan.*—Orme and Cambridge.

“ *America.*—Robertson, Andrew's American War.

“ *Africa.*—Merely from travels, as Mungo Park, Bruce.

“ *BIOGRAPHY.*

“ Robertson's Charles V.—Cesar, Sallust (Catiline and Jugurtha), Lives of Marlborough and Eugene, Tekeli, Bonnard, Buonaparte, all the British Poets, both by Johnson and Anderson, Rousseau's Confessions, Life of Cromwell, British Plutarch, British Neros, Campbell's Lives of the Admirals, Charles XII., Czar Peter, Catherine II., Henry Lord Kaines, Marmontel, Teignmouth's Sir William Jones, Life of Newton, Belisaire, with thousands not to be detailed.

“ *LAW.*

“ Blackstone, Montesquieu.

“ *PHILOSOPHY.*

“ Paley, Locke, Bacon, Hume, Berkely, Drummond, Beattie, and Bolingbroke. Hobbes I detest.

“ *GEOGRAPHY.*

“ Strabo, Cellarius, Adams, Pinkerton, and Guthrie.

“ *POETRY.*

“ All the British Classics, as before detailed, with most of the living poets, Scott, Southey, &c.—Some French, in the original, of which the Cid is my favourite.—Little Italian.—Greek and Latin without number;—these last I shall give up in future.—I have translated a good deal from both languages, verse as well as prose.

“ *ELOQUENCE.*

“ Demosthenes, Cicero, Quintilian, Sheridan, Austin's Chironomia, and Parliamentary Debates, from the Revolution to the year 1742.

“ *DIVINITY.*

“ Blair, Porteus, Tillotson, Hooker,—all very tiresome. I abhor books of religion, though I reverence and love my God, without the blasphemous notions of sectaries, or belief in their absurd and damnable heresies, mysteries, and Thirty-nine Articles.

“ *MISCELLANIES.*

“ Spectator, Rambler, World, &c. &c.—Novels by the thousand.

“ All the books here enumerated I have taken down from memory. I recollect reading them, and can quote passages from any mentioned. I have, of course, omitted several in my catalogue; but the greater part of the above I perused before the age of fifteen. Since I left Harrow I have become idle and conceited, from scribbling rhyme and making love to women.

“ B.—Nov. 30, 1807.

“ I have also read (to my regret at present) above four thousand novels, including the works of Cervantes, Fielding, Smollet, Richardson, Mackenzie, Sterne, Rabelais, and Rousseau, &c. &c. The book, in my opinion most useful to a man who wished to acquire the reputation of being well read, with the least trouble, is ‘Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy,’ the most amusing and instructive medley of quotations and classical anecdotes I ever perused. But a superficial reader must take care, or his intricacies will bewilder him. If, however, he has patience to go through his volumes, he will be more improved for literary conversation than by the perusal of any twenty

other works with which I am acquainted,—at least, in the English language."

The notice of his early infidelity is given, we think, with great delicacy and propriety.

" It is but rarely that infidelity or scepticism finds an entrance into youthful minds. That readiness to take the future upon trust, which is the charm of this period of life, would naturally, indeed, make it the season of belief as well as of hope. There are also then, still fresh in the mind, the impressions of early religious culture, which, even in those who begin soonest to question their faith, give way but slowly to the encroachments of doubt, and, in the mean time, extend the benefit of their moral restraint over a portion of life when it is acknowledged such restraints are most necessary. If exemption from the checks of religion be, as infidels themselves allow, a state of freedom from responsibility dangerous at all times, it must be peculiarly so in that season of temptation, youth, when the passions are sufficiently disposed to usurp a latitude for themselves, without taking a licence also from infidelity to enlarge their range. It is, therefore, fortunate that, for the causes just stated, the inroads of scepticism and disbelief should be seldom felt in the mind till a period of life, when the character, already formed, is out of the reach of their disturbing influence,—when, being the result, however erroneous, of thought and reasoning, they are likely to partake of the sobriety of the process by which they were acquired, and, being considered but as matters of pure speculation, to have as little share in determining the mind towards evil as, too often, the most orthodox creed has, at the same age, in influencing it towards good.

" While, in this manner, the moral qualities of the unbeliever himself are guarded from some of the mischiefs, that might, at an earlier age, attend such doctrines, the danger also of his communicating the infection to others is, for reasons of a similar nature, considerably diminished. The same vanity or daring which may have prompted the youthful sceptic's opinions, will lead him likewise, it is probable, rashly and irreverently to avow them, without regard either to the effect of his example on those around him, or to the odium which, by such an avowal, he entails irreparably on himself. But, at a riper age, these consequences are, in general, more cautiously weighed. The infidel, if at all considerate of the happiness of others, will naturally pause before he chases from their hearts a hope of which his own feels the want so desolately. If regardful only of himself, he will no less naturally shrink from the promulgation of opinions which, in no age, have men uttered with impunity. In either case there is a tolerably good security for his silence;—for, should benevolence not restrain him from making converts of others, prudence may, at least, prevent him from making a martyr of himself.

" Unfortunately, Lord Byron was an exception to the usual course of such lapses. With him, the canker showed itself ' in the morn and dew of youth,' when the effect of such 'blastments' is, for every reason, most fatal,—and, in addition to the real misfortune of being an unbeliever at any age, he exhibited the rare and melancholy spectacle of an unbelieving schoolboy. The same prematurity of development which brought his passions and genius so early into action, enabled him also to anticipate this worst, dreariest result of reason;

and at the very time of life when a spirit and temperament like his most required control, those checks, which religious prepossessions best supply, were almost wholly wanting.

" We have seen, in those two Addresses to the Deity which I have selected from among his unpublished Poems, and still more strongly in a passage of the Catalogue of his studies, at what a boyish age the authority of all systems and sects was avowedly shaken off by his inquiring spirit. Yet, even in these, there is a fervour of adoration mingled with his defiance of creeds, through which the piety implanted in his nature (as it is deeply in all poetic natures) unequivocally shows itself; and had he then fallen within the reach of such guidance and example as would have seconded and fostered these natural dispositions, the licence of opinion, into which he afterwards broke loose, might have been averted. His scepticism, if not wholly removed, might have been softened down into that humble doubt, which, so far from being inconsistent with a religious spirit, is, perhaps, its best guard against presumption and uncharitableness; and, at all events, even if his own views of religion had not been brightened or elevated, he would have learned not wantonly to cloud or disturb those of others. But there was no such monitor near him. After his departure from Southwell, he had not a single friend or relative to whom he could look up with respect; but was thrown alone on the world, with his passions and his pride, to revel in the fatal discovery which he imagined himself to have made of the nothingness of the future, and the all-paramount claims of the present. By singular ill-fortune, too, the individual who, among all his college friends, had taken the strongest hold on his admiration and affection, and whose loss he afterwards lamented with brotherly tenderness, was to the same extent as himself, if not more strongly a sceptic."

" As already, before his acquaintance with Mr. Matthews commenced, Lord Byron had begun to bewilder himself in the mazes of scepticism, it would be unjust to impute to this gentleman any further share in the formation of his noble friend's opinions than what arose from the natural influence of example and sympathy;—an influence which, as it was felt perhaps equally on both sides, rendered the contagion of their doctrines, in a great measure reciprocal. In addition, too, to this community of sentiment on such subjects, they were both, in no ordinary degree, possessed by that dangerous spirit of ridicule, whose impulses even the pious cannot always restrain, and which draws the mind on, by sort of irresistible fascination, to disport itself most wantonly on the brink of all that is most solemn and awful. It is not wonderful, therefore, that, in such society, the opinions of the noble poet should have been, at least, accelerated in that direction to which their bias already leaned; and though he cannot be said to have become thus confirmed in these doctrines—as neither now, nor at any time of his life, was he a confirmed unbeliever,—he had undoubtedly learned to feel less uneasy under his scepticism, and even to mingle somewhat of boast and of levity with his expression of it. At the very first onset of his correspondence with Mr. Dallas, we find him proclaiming his sentiments on all such subjects with a flippancy and confidence, far different from the tone in which he had first ventured on his doubts,—

from that fervid sadness, as of a heart loth to part with its illusions, which breathes through every line of those prayers, that, but a year before, his pen had traced."

The account of taking his seat in the House of Peers is curious and characteristic. Mr. Dallas, a distant relation of his Lordship, speaks:

" The Satire (English Bards and Scotch Reviewers) was published about the middle of March, previous to which he took his seat in the House of Lords on the 13th of the same month. On that day, passing down St. James's-street, but with no intention of calling, I saw his chariot at his door, and went in. His countenance, paler than usual, showed that his mind was agitated, and that he was thinking of the nobleman to whom he had once looked for a hand and countenance in his introduction to the House. He said to me—' I am glad you happened to come in; I am going to take my seat, perhaps you will go with me.' I expressed my readiness to attend him; while, at the same time, I concealed the shock I felt on thinking that this young man, who, by birth, fortune, and talent, stood high in life, should have lived so unconnected and neglected by persons of his own rank, that there was not a single member of the senate to which he belonged, to whom he could or would apply to introduce him in a manner becoming his birth. I saw that he felt the situation, and I fully partook his indignation. \* \* \*

" After some talk about the Satire, the last sheets of which were in the press, I accompanied Lord Byron to the House. He was received in one of the antechambers by some of the officers in attendance, with whom he settled respecting the fees he had to pay. One of them went to apprise the Lord Chancellor of his being there, and soon returned for him. There were very few persons in the House. Lord Eldon was going through some ordinary business. When Lord Byron entered, I thought he looked still paler than before; and he certainly wore a countenance in which mortification was mingled with, but subdued by, indignation. He passed the woolsack without looking round, and advanced to the table where the proper officer was attending to administer the oaths. When he had gone through them, the Chancellor quitted his seat, and went towards him with a smile, putting out his hand warmly to welcome him; and, though I did not catch his words, I saw that he paid him some compliment. This was all thrown away upon Lord Byron, who made a stiff bow, and put the tips of his fingers into the Chancellor's hand. \* \* \* The Chancellor did not press a welcome so received, but resumed his seat; while Lord Byron carelessly seated himself for a few minutes on one of the empty benches to the left of the throne, usually occupied by the lords in opposition. When, on his joining me, I expressed what I had felt he said: ' If I had shaken hands heartily, he would have set me down for one of his party—but I will have nothing to do with any of them, on either side; I have taken my seat, and now I will go abroad.' We returned to St. James's-street, but he did not recover his spirits.

" From his expressions in a letter to Mrs. Byron, already cited, that he must 'do something in the House soon,' as well as from a more definite intimation of the same intention to Mr. Harness, it would appear that he had, at this time, serious thoughts of at once enter-

ing on the high political path, which his station as an hereditary legislator opened to him. But, whatever may have been the first movements of his ambition in this direction, they were soon relinquished. Had he been connected with any distinguished political families, his love of eminence, seconded by such example and sympathy, would have impelled him, no doubt, to seek renown in the fields of party warfare, where it might have been his fate to afford a signal instance of that transmuting process by which, as Pope says, the corruption of a poet sometimes leads to the generation of a statesman. Luckily, however, for the world (though, whether luckily for himself may be questioned), the brighter empire of poesy was destined to claim him all its own. The loneliness, indeed, of his position in society at this period, left destitute, as he was, of all those sanctions and sympathies, by which youth, at its first start, is usually surrounded, was, of itself, enough to discourage him from embarking in a pursuit, where it is chiefly on such extrinsic advantages that any chance of success must depend. So far from taking an active part in the proceedings of his noble brethren, he appears to have regarded even the ceremony of his attendance among them as irksome and mortifying; and, in a few days after his admission to his seat, he withdrew himself in disgust to the seclusion of his own Abbey, there to brood over the bitterness of premature experience, or meditate, in the scenes and adventures of other lands, a freer outlet for his impatient spirit than it could command at home.

It was not long, however, before he was summoned back to town by the success of his Satire—the quick sale of which already rendered the preparation of a new edition necessary. His zealous agent, Mr. Dallas, had taken care to transmit to him, in his retirement, all the favourable opinions of the Work he could collect; and it is not unamusing, as showing the sort of steps by which Fame at first mounts, to find the approbation of such authorities as Pratt and the magazine-writers put forward among the first rewards and encouragements of a Byron."

His own subsequent criticism on this Satire is eminently just, and reflects some credit on his heart, as well as on his judgment.

"The greater part of this Satire, I most sincerely wish had never been written; not only on account of the injustice of much of the critical and some of the personal part of it, but the tone and temper are such as I cannot approve."

"BYRON."

"Diodati, Geneva, July 14, 1816."

We shall, if possible, resume our notice of this interesting volume in an early Number.

*Constable's Miscellany* of Original and Selected Publications, in the various departments of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Vols. 49 and 50.—Constable and Co. Edinburgh; and Hurst and Chance, London.

We have already had occasion to observe, that the Public is indebted to the late sagacious Mr. Constable, for originating the important improvement in modern Literature, of publishing valuable works, both original and re-printed, on such reasonable terms as to place them within the reach of a much more humble class than formerly had access to them. The idea, if we recollect aright, was suggested to him by Mr. Brougham's pamphlet on the education of

the people. The experiment has both proved eminently successful in itself, and been the prolific parent of various other series of works, which bid fair to alter the character of modern literature altogether. The present volumes consist of the *Life of Hernan Cortes*, by Don Telesforo de Trueba y Cosio, already known to us as a writer of fiction; (the Castilians, and Gomez Arias being his productions,) and of a *History of Chivalry*, and the *Crusades*, by the Rev. H. Stebbing, M. A. M. R. S. L. which is to be completed in a second volume. The history of the Conqueror of Mexico, had been so circumstantially related by Dr. Robertson already, that it was almost superfluous to employ a Spanish Don to tell the tale anew.— Nevertheless, we must do Trueba the justice to acknowledge, that he has performed his task with ability and care, and that his foreign style is singularly correct and spirited. Of the private life of Cortes we know little, save that he early evinced a rash and amorous disposition, which, in more matured manhood, became equally vehement and fickle. Our author would dispose us to believe that Cortes was a man naturally mild and lenient; and accounts for the various "isolated measures of cruelty, and even injustice," which the truth of history necessarily compels him to lay to his charge, upon the tyrant's plea "necessity."

In contemplating the various and mighty consequences of the magnificent discovery of Columbus, one cannot help feeling deeply saddened and humiliated by the reflection, that misery and extermination, in the most harrowing and appalling form, tracked the footsteps of the men who should and might have been distinguished only by the propagation of peace and good will, and all the arts of civilized and christian life. In the case of New Spain, it is some little consolation, and but a little, to consider, that if the religion of truth and peace was there baptized in blood, at least it displaced and removed a fierce and sanguinary superstition. Great as was the progress which the Mexicans had made in many of the arts of peace before the natives of the old world visited their shores, their mythology, and the mode of propitiating their demon-gods, was still of the most bloody and revolting description.

Thus Don Trueba writes :

"In examining the religion of the Mexicans, we are struck with horror and amazement. Nothing can be conceived more barbarous and sanguinary than the ceremonies by which their gloomy superstition hoped to propitiate a blood-thirsty mythology. But the atrocity of human sacrifices, so prevalent in the Mexican empire, was doubly enhanced by the regular system into which religious rites were conducted. They had magnificent temples and other places consecrated to the service of the deities. The number of priests was very great, and they enjoyed high distinction in the state, as well as extraordinary weight in its councils."

Indeed, a considerable portion of their time was devoted by the Mexicans to the practice of religious ceremonies, and celebration of their festivals. Nor is this strange. Their mythological rites were strictly connected with those occupations which were most congenial to their character. The Mexicans were naturally warlike and ferocious, and accordingly the first of their gods was the god of war, called *Huitzilopochtli*. To this divinity they paid special worship; and nothing could exceed the disgusting

atrocity of the sacrifices continually made to this terrific idol. The most rigid and frightful courses of penance were undergone by the fanatic Mexicans, in order to propitiate this cruel deity; severe fasts and corporeal macerations, and every torment which superstition can suggest, were cheerfully undertaken in honour of *Huitzilopochtli*. Yet, lamentable as this ignorance might be, it was lenient in its effects when compared to the inhuman butcheries that daily stained the altars and the temples. The precise number of victims that were annually sacrificed cannot be ascertained, but, according to the most moderate computation, they amounted to no less than twenty thousand. The manner in which the sacrifices were conducted was, if possible, more atrocious than their extent. The mode of inflicting death varied according to the occasion of the festival, or the quality of the victim. In some cases the sufferers were drowned; in others, they were left to perish with hunger—shut up in dismal caverns on the mountains. The gladiatorial sacrifice, which was considered the most honourable, and in which the victim had a chance of escape by vanquishing his antagonist, was in many instances resorted to; but the most ordinary manner of performing the cruel ceremony was by opening the breast of the victim.

"It would be unseasonable here to detail the various other modes of performing sacrifices; enough has been said to demonstrate, that a mythology so barbarous and abominable could not but be accompanied with every outward form of terror and gloom. Most of the Mexican deities were of a malignant nature, and only to be propitiated by blood. Hence we find them represented under forms and emblems the most fearful and repugnant. Gigantic monsters, and images in which ingenuity had exhausted its stores of horror, were the objects to which the Mexicans addressed their adoration, whilst their temples were always decorated with the figures of serpents, tigers, and other destructive animals. The gods being cruel and vindictive, the genius of the Mexican religion was necessarily dark and horrible. Fear became the principle of action; and by calling the most ungenerous feelings of human nature into play, sympathy was destroyed, and all the nicer touches of social life entirely annihilated.—Thus, by a strange anomaly, we find that the Mexicans, the people of the New World who had made the greatest progress in civilization, were, in many cases, the most ferocious of the Indians, whilst their cruelty, in many of their ceremonies and manners, surpassed even that of the rude savage."

The complimentary interview of Cortes with Cacamatzin, nephew of Montezuma, and subsequently with that magnificent sovereign himself, is thus described :

"The disquietude of Montezuma grew now to a painful excitement. The priests contributed to augment the turmoil of his mind by the relation of certain ominous dreams, and other superstitious signs which had recently taken place. The perturbation of the Mexican sovereign became at length so tormenting, his fears were so painfully excited, his thoughts so various and perplexing, that, without waiting for the issue of the last message, he called to council his brother Cuilhauzin, the lord of Tezcuco, and a few others of the principal magnates of his empire, to deliberate what course he was to adopt. The opinions given